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TO RHEHWSR/WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003666

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TAGS: [IZ](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [PTER](#)
SUBJECT: BAGHDAD'S AL BAYAA POLICE STATION

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Classified By: Classified by Joseph Gregoire, PRT Team Leader, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: On September 19 Baghdad Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) officials revisited the Al Bayaa Police Station in Baghdad. Overall conditions at the police station have improved compared to two months ago, but major problems with trash buildup and vehicle maintenance remain. Recent MNF-I sweeps in the Rasalah area (covered by this station) resulted in an immediate drop in crime and violence, but police officials doubt that the drop will be sustainable. Active police investigations are limited to trying to match bodies found in the street to missing person cases on file and the notification of family members owing to fear of reprisals. Decreased investigations have led to fewer arrests: 46 prisoners were being held in the detention facility, down from 150 two years ago. 23 detainees have been held for over one year without trial. Several detainees claimed to have been tortured or abused; others claimed rampant police corruption. END SUMMARY.

BAYAA POLICE STATION AND SECURITY IN THE DISTRICT

12. (SBU). The al-Bayaa Police Station and Detention Facility is located in the neighborhood of Doura, in the Rasheed district of south Baghdad. The station is led by COL Sami Abdul Salam, who was promoted to station chief two months ago after serving at the station the past two years. Salam has 322 officers assigned under his command to cover an area of roughly 120 square kilometers (6 x 6 miles). The estimated population within the station's boundary is roughly 260,000 people. Recent improvements at the station include the addition of two bunk houses, secure parking, and improvements to detention cells. Trash removal is a significant problem: there is no regular removal and trash continues to pile up in the parking lot. Vehicle maintenance is another issue. Twelve of 19 vehicles were operational at the time of the visit. Salam expressed frustration about supply and maintenance of the station.

13. (C) Of the 322 officers assigned, only four are investigative officers. According to one of them virtually no serious investigations are being conducted. Hammed told PRT officials that 11 of the districts officers had been killed in the past two years and another 12 seriously wounded. Hammed explained that the investigators are afraid to look seriously into crimes or murders, since arresting the killers would result in retaliation against the arresting officer by the arrestee's friends in the government or militias. For the most part, investigations are limited to trying to match missing person reports to bodies found in the street and

notifying the families. Hammed lamented that this was not always the case, claiming that two years ago police routinely investigated crimes and made arrests, and the jail held at one time held as many as 150 prisoners awaiting trial.

14. (C) Asked about the impact of the Coalition clearing operations being done as part of the Baghdad Security Plan, Salem replied that recent sweeps through Risalah have resulted in a significant drop in crime, although he predicted this would only be temporary. Salem believes many criminals have simply moved to neighboring areas.

CLAIMS BY DETAINEES OF ABUSE

15. (C) PRT officials were allowed access to the detention facility co-located with the station and spoke with several of the 46 detainees being held. Two detainees separately claimed they had been hooded and taken to another location in the station where they were hooked up to electrical wires and tortured to elicit confessions. Several detainees asserted that they needed serious medical attention, some claiming to have constant itching and possible tuberculosis. (COMMENT: Detention facility officials claimed that a coalition doctor visits the facility approximately every 10 days. END COMMENT)

18. (C) Detainees also told PRT officials that bribery is rampant in the facility. Almost anything can be had, they said, including freedom, for between USD 5,000 and 20,000. One claimed that a detainee could have his case presented to an investigative judge more quickly for USD 1,500, and another claimed that one could be taken to the hospital for treatment for USD 1,000.

19. (C) Several detainees also complained that they had been held a long time without trial. Detention facility officials confirmed to PRT officials that 23 of the 46 detainees had

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BEEN HELD OVER ONE YEAR WITHOUT TRIAL. THEY CLAIMED THIS WAS OFTEN THE FAULT OF DETAINEES, WHO REFUSED TO PROVIDE INVESTIGATORS CORRECT IDENTIFICATION, MAKING IT DIFFICULT TO PURSUE THEIR CASES.